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The Interchurch
World Movement
of North America

WHAT IT IS

The Interchurch World Movement of North America

A THOROUGH-GOING plan of cooperation between evangelical churches in North America in their entire educational and missionary program at home and abroad—this is the central organizing principle of the Interchurch World Movement of North America.

Many allied nations have cooperated in the war without losing their individuality or sovereignty. Surely the Christian churches can do as much in order to take possession of their unoccupied fields and hasten the coming of Christ's Kingdom throughout the earth.

Multitudes of Christian people have been feeling more deeply than ever before that the only fundamental and final solution of all the great problems now confronting the world, is the Christian solution. Permanent peace among nations must depend upon a miraculous expansion of Christianity. The friction between capital and labor can only be removed when the New Testament principles concerning the rights and responsibilities of both labor and capital are accepted. Every moral problem is primarily a religious problem. Christ for all of life and for every life must be the goal of the church.

The conviction has also been deepening that since the churches can do so much more by working together than they can do by working without intelligent regard to each other, it is their clear duty to cooperate to the fullest possible extent. This duty has come to multitudes of earnest Christians as a profound moral and spiritual obli-

gation. Forward-looking leaders of the church in every part of North America have felt that some new measure of church cooperation was both imperative and inevitable. The Interchurch World Movement seems to be the answer to their longing and their prayer.

THOUGH this desire for some comprehensive program of cooperation was so generally expressed, the first definite official action looking towards a practical plan was taken by the Executive Committee of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Presbyterian Church, with headquarters at Nashville. At their call, one hundred and thirty-five representatives of the home and foreign mission boards of North America met at 25 Madison Avenue, New York City, on December 17, 1918, for an entire day of conference and prayer concerning this one question—the duty of closer cooperation between the churches. The conviction in that conference seemed to be general that the hour had come for such a development. Not a single voice was raised during the entire day in opposition to the proposal for a closer cooperation of the churches. It was therefore decided to appoint a representative committee of twenty persons to outline a plan and present it to the various conferences of church leaders that would be in session during the following month of January. Much time and prayer were given to working out this plan, which has since received the endorsement of the following boards and interdenominational agencies:

Foreign Missions Conference of North America.
Federation of Women's Boards of Foreign Missions of North America.
Home Missions Council.

Council of Women for Home Missions.

Committee on Cooperation in Latin America.

Laymen's Missionary Movement.

Missionary Education Movement.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

World's Sunday School Association.

International Sunday School Association.

Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations in the United States and Canada.

Council of Church Boards of Education.

World Christian Endeavor Union.

United Society of Christian Endeavor.

American Tract Society.

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Foreign Mission Board of the Christian Church.

Christian Woman's Board of Missions.

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Commission on Missions of the National Council of Congregationalists.

American Missionary Association.

Congregational Home Mission Society.

Congregational Church Building Society.

Congregational Sunday School Extension Society.

Foreign Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of Christ).

American Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of Christ).

Board of Education of the Disciples.

Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity of Disciples.

Board of Ministerial Relief of the Disciples.

National Benevolent Association (Disciples of Christ).

Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

American Friends Board of Foreign Missions.

Board of Home Missions Five Years' Meeting of Friends.

Executive Committee of the Five Years' Meeting of the Friends in America.

Joint Centenary Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North and South).

Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen (Moravian Church in America).

Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (North).

Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (North).

Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (North).

(List of endorsements, continued)

Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Foreign Board of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (South).

Home Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (South).

Committee of Christian Education and Ministerial Relief of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (South).

Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church.

Board of Home Missions of the United Presbyterian Church.

Freedman's Board of the United Presbyterian Church.

Convocation Committee of the United Presbyterian Church.

Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America.

General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States.

Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States.

Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States.

United Missionary and Stewardship Committee of the Reformed Church in the United States.

General Board of Administration of the United Brethren in Christ.

Executive Committee of Home Missions of the United Brethren in Christ.

Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the United Evangelical Church.

Board of Church Extension of the United Evangelical Church.

THE main features of the plan are five in number:

1. A United Study of the World Field. County by county in this country and district by district in foreign lands, it is proposed that the exact facts be discovered to the end that the needs of each community and region may be appraised and the whole task of the church put in clear light and due proportion.

2. A United Budget. On the basis of the world survey it is proposed that a joint budget be made, every item of which shall approve itself to the judgment of the several mission boards, so far as it relates to the work of each board, and have the approval of a strong interdenominational

committee aided by experts in the various fields covered, this committee to review and harmonize the details. While this budget will be for one year, it will take account of needs for five years.

3. A United Cultivation of the Home Church. In order to bring the facts contained in the surveys to the attention of the people and to widen their vision and deepen their interest there will be a nation-wide field campaign and special attention will be given in the whole Movement to missionary information, Bible study, religious education, stewardship, life service and the deepening of the prayer life of the church.

4. A United Financial Appeal. During a given number of days at some period in 1920 it is proposed that the 50,000,000 people constituting the Protestant constituency of America be asked, community by community, to underwrite the united budget for the year ahead, payment of pledges to be made week by week through customary church channels. There will be a united treasury to care for undesignated gifts. Many have asked what the total of the anticipated united budget will be. Not even an estimate can now be made. Only when the world survey is completed, with its painstaking examination of every section of the field and its balancing of obligations, can a figure be named.

5. A United Program of Work. It is proposed that this plan shall carry the steadily growing cooperation of recent years in the mission field on to the point of the most complete coordination which the conditions of our separate organizations permit. Funds secured will be expended with detailed regard to the requirements of fraternal cooperation.

IT is proposed that the whole broad field of missions be covered, including home and foreign missions in all their branches, Christian education in all its aspects and Sunday school interests of every type. Interdenominational agencies of the types above indicated are included to the end that there may be close cooperation between all forces.

In order that the earliest possible beginning may be made upon the exacting task involved in these proposals, a preliminary organization has been effected by the agencies above named, and beginnings made in blocking out needful plans. All directors and officials of mission boards have been asked to cooperate and have generously responded.

As will be seen, it is not possible at this stage to speak authoritatively concerning all the details of the plan. Much thought and conference, however, have been given to the many questions involved in organization, survey, publicity, informing and inspiring the church, budget-making, canvass, method of payment, relation to special denominational plans now in progress, etc. It is the Committee's conviction that a practical and equitable solution can be found for each problem involved.

A conference of representatives of cooperating agencies was held in Cleveland, Ohio, April 30-May 1, followed by an all-day meeting of the General Committee of the Movement. Both of these meetings were largely attended; the deepest interest was manifested throughout; the discussions were frank, full and helpful and all actions taken were positively unanimous. The

feeling was general that the Movement represents the deepest longing of the churches, that its ideals are the worthiest and that the general plans thus far announced are entirely feasible. The Findings of the Cleveland Conference are printed in Leaflet No. 21.

PARTICULAR interest is also felt in the question whether the proposed union of effort is to be for a single year or for a series of years. Manifestly this will be for the organizations concerned to answer in the light of experience. We express our hope that this will prove the first of a long series of years of such cooperative effort. The central and impelling motive of the whole proposal is that we shall so join our forces as to put the enthusiasm, the intelligence and the devotion of American Protestantism solidly behind the world task in which we have thus far fallen so far short of our duty. Only thus can we secure adequate enlistment of our young men and women in the heroic sacrifices of Christian leadership. Only thus can we secure adequate funds for such a program as is demanded by fidelity to Christ and his kingdom.

The plan is submitted to the evangelical denominations of America with the urgent request that it be the theme of careful thought and believing prayer.

The following constitute the General Committee of the Movement:

F. W. Ayer, Chairman
Fred B. Smith, Vice-Chairman
William B. Millar, Recording Secretary
George M. Fowles, Treasurer
S. Earl Taylor, General Secretary

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Charles L. White
J. Campbell White
Herbert L. Willett
L. B. Wolf
Mrs. May Leonard Woodruff

See also the following additional leaflets regarding the Interchurch World Movement:

No. 4, "Its Origin, Purposes and Plans."

No. 8, "Its Organization, with Suggestions for Its Development and Methods of Operation."

No. 21, "Findings of the Cleveland Conference"

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